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A
LETTER

FROM

John Cockburn, D. D.

To his Friend in L O N D O N ;

Giving an Account,

Why the other *Narratives* about

Bourignianism

Are not yet Publish'd,

And Answering some Reflections
Pass'd upon the First.

L O N D O N,

Printed for *William Keblewhite*, at the *White Swan*
in *St. Paul's Church-yard* ; and *Hannah Hindmarsh*,
at the *Golden Ball* in *Cornhill*, MDC XCVIII.

A

LETTER

TO HIS FRIEND IN A. C. W. D. C.

WHICH IS A. C. W. D. C.

And Answering Some Reflections

And Answering Some Reflections

LONDON

Printed for H. Smith, at the Golden Rule, in Cornhill, M.DCCCXII.

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LETTER

FROM

John Cockburn, D. D.

To his Friend in LONDON.

Reverend and Dear SIR,

THOUGH there was not Divine Authority for it, yet there is very good Reason to Re-
prove and Censure Mens positive Resolu-
tions, of *doing this* or *that*, without a pro-
found Respect to the *Lord's Will*: for both Great
and Small, whether they will or not, are altogether
in the Power of God; who very often, by his secret
and unforeseen Providence, dispolet them, as both
short of, and beyond, so besides those Expectations
and Desires with which they amuse themselves, and
please others:

*Res Deus nostras celeri citatas
Turbine versat.*

*Seneca Thy-
estes.*

But though both Scripture and Experience teach us
this important Truth; yet such is the Vanity of Man,

that he resolves, promises, and undertakes, as if he were Master of himself, and wholly at his own disposal.

- II. I cannot free my self altogether from this Common Infirmary, when I publish'd my First *Narrative of Bourignianism*. Indeed, I was never so prophane, as to forget my Dependance upon God, or to think that I could undertake or execute any thing, without His Permission and Assistance: But supposing that He would grant Life and Health, and that Assistance which may be expected, upon his own Promise, to all sincere Endeavours to serve Himself, and the Interest of Truth and Religion; I say, supposing this, I did not apprehend any occasion of delaying the other *Narratives*, which I intended and promised; I did not expect, neither had I any fears of an Obligation to lay down my Pen, and take up my Staff; to leave *England*, and walk as a Pilgrim again, into a Foreign Country, which hath frustrated several other Designs, as it hath interrupted the prosecution of this about *Bourignianism*.

- III. *Enthusiasts* are all Masters of Celestial Politicks, and take upon them to assert the secret Reasons of all Publick and Private Dispensations, as positively as if they were Secretaries of Heaven, or sate in the Council there, or kept an intimate Correspondence with the Supreme Court: Wherefore some of the Admirers and Followers of *Antonia Bourignon* will perhaps say, That God has forced me to wander thus, to punish my assaulting the Credit of so Excellent a Person, and the endeavouring to raise Prejudices against her Doctrine and Principles, which not only may contribute much to reform the World, but also which are the only means by which a General Reformation can

can be effected. I do grant indeed, that that which hath befallen me, is a new Affliction, attended with several Inconveniencies to my self; which I take from God, both as a Punishment and Trial, and I do pray most heartily unto Him who overrules all things, that this and other Misfortunes which have befallen me, may add to my Faith, and produce Repentance, Wisdom, Experience, Patience, Hope, and all other *Fruits of Righteousness*. But though I have many things to repent of, yet I see no reason to repent of my undertaking the Detection of the Errors and Delusions of *Mademoiselle Bourignon*, and her Followers. Nay, I may rather think, that the Wise Providence of God, that useth to contrive all things so wonderfully, that each most fitly answereth divers excellent Purposes, hath cast me upon this Shore, though against my Will, as for other Ends, so to render me more capable to prosecute this useful Design; for now I have opportunity to speak with those who knew *Antonia Bourignon*. I can have a better Account of her Self, and I am better furnish'd with her Books, and other Books relating to her, than could have been had in *England*. Thus while I am removed from dear Relations, and most worthy Friends, and the Satisfaction and Conveniency which I enjoyed amongst them, I am brought nearer to this purpose; which, I hope, will prove both acceptable and profitable to the Publick.

It was impossible to go on with the *Narratives*, while I was travelling and unsettled in a most severe Winter; but the Delay shall, God willing, be now compensated, by making them more full and demonstrative. Early Buds are wont to please the Curious, who generally are a little impatient; but the Trees flourish

flourish best, and are most fruitful, which do not over-hastily put forth before their proper Season. I would not have publish'd the Account of *Bourignianism* by Parcels, nor the *First Narrative* so soon, if it had not been to satisfy the Curiosity of some, who earnestly desired any Tact of that Matter, to which they were altogether Strangers.

- V. But instead of Apologies for my Delay, it may seem to some more adviseable, to leave off the Thoughts of continuing this Subject, that I may have rest from the Censures of Men, and not be obliged to engage in some unpleasant Contests, for which, they say, some are preparing. But whether it be so, or not, I am not much concerned; nor did I enter upon this Subject so rashly, as to be thus easily diverted from it. The Censures of Men, doubtless surprize me, nor disturb my repose: I know every Reader will be a Judge; and will pass Sentence according to his Knowledge and Inclinations, and I am willing it should be so. If the Censure be Just, it is useful either to Confirm or to Correct; if it be trivial and malicious, it gives Matter for the Exercise of Christian Patience and Meekness; and if it be material, it affords Occasion for further Illustrations: so that one way or another, Censures are profitable. I have had Time to inform my self of those which have been pass'd upon the *First Narrative*, and I crave leave to offer them to your Consideration.

- VII. Some say that the Design is not *tanti*; that there is more noise made about the matter than is needful: Why, say they, all this Zeal against Antonia Bourignon? What though her Principles prevail, some of them are harmless, others tend to Piety; and what may produce so good an Effect, ought not to be obstructed. If
- Persons

Persons be Good, it is no matter upon what Motives and Inducements. Suppose she was not absolutely Perfect, yet she was Pious, and her design was to reform the World; she shews wherein its Corruption lies, and lays down very good Moral Rules and Directions how to overcome it. What then is there here which should offend?

To all this, I answer, First, That the Offence is not because she is a Woman. Monsieur Pairet says, That Bearded Animals take it ill, that God should have manifested himself so far to a Woman. But by his leave, he is mistaken; we do not quarrel at the Divine Oeconomy, nor envy his Grace in any. I am far from advising Men to enter into a War with the other Sex; they will gain nothing by it, inasmuch as it would be very unnatural. They employ their Wit very ill, who write Satyr against Women; for at least as severe ones might be made against Men: and commonly they have but small share of Sense, Discretion and Vertue, who deny them to Women. But whatever Respect be due to the Sex in general, or to any particular Person we must guard against Dotage: we ought to be just to all, but not unreasonably Fond of any. The Behaviour of *Lyss* the phantastical Shepherd, was not Respect, but Madness: and they are not much wiser than he, who, like him, admire the very Deformities of their Mistress, who fancy her without all Imperfection, altogether Divine, the Master-piece of the Creation, and who follow her, as he did, through all places, gathering the Rags and Scraps, and licking up the very Dirt and Dust that falls from her. The Application is plain.

Again, As I do not oppose *Antonia Bourignon*, from any pique against her Sex, so neither upon the account of her presuming to Teach and Reform the World; which

VII.

VIII.

which, it may be thought, we would have reserved to our selves, as our own particular province: for whatever be the Privileges of our Charter, we have no reason to fear or quarrel with Interlopers, if they do not impose upon and cheat People with false and counterfeit Wares. Would God all were Prophets!

IIIV

I heartily wish that the True Spirit might rest upon all; this would be no Prejudice to the Clergy, but a great Ease to them; this would not abate the true Respect which is due to their Persons or Functions, but rather encrease it. The Ministry is so much slighted, and the Sacred Offices thereof so little regarded, only because there is little Communication with the Spirit of God, little Knowledge of Him or his Ways, and because generally Men savour more the things of the World, than those that are of God.

IX.

Finally, I do not oppose *Antonia Bourignon*, because I am an Enemy to true Piety: I would promote this, as much as She, or any of her Followers. But what, shall we Lye for God? or spread Errors, to advance Piety? Every one ought to be zealous for Holiness and Piety: But this Pretext will not justify a Cheat, nor make it lawful to impose that which is not True; nor is the Piety solid or sure, which is so gained. There are important and certain Truths, sufficient to convince and persuade Reasonable and Thinking Persons; and 'tis but doing disservice to Religion and Piety, to call in the Assistance of Dreams, Whimsies, and phantastical Delusions: The mixture of these raises a Suspicion, and renders the Wary even jealous of what cannot be denied. The Judgment of those who pretend to Sense, and more Knowledge, will sway the ignorant Mobb, who are never at the pains to Think. The prevalency of Atheistical Opinions, at present, proceeds

IIIV

proceeds from the favourable reception which they are believed to have amongst some knowing Persons, who yet never examined them thoroughly. And as the Atheism of these Parts has been derived from France and Italy, so it had its Original there, by Preaching up so much the Fables of Purgatory, the ridiculous Stories of the *Ben-Diau*, the Legends of the *Virgin*, *Saint Teresa*, *Mary Magdalen* of *Buscizi*, *Saint Francis*, *Loyola*, *Xavier*, and other Ancient and Modern Saints; instead of those Certain and most instructive Instances which are set down in Holy Scripture. These Delusions can be current only for some time, or with the very Credulous; and when they are detected, they do all the mischief which the Devil, who first suggested them, did intend: that is, they shake Mens Faith, and fill their Minds with Doubts about Religion; seeing those who teach it, while they pretend to be infallible, take occasion to teach and advance such things as could come only into the Heads of Knaves or Fools.

The Devil certainly is a great Enemy to Piety: but the Pretext of it, has been as serviceable to him, as any other Stratagem. He, as an Usurper upon the Kingdom of Christ, who has form'd a Design of wresting it out of the hands of its Rightful and Lawful Lord; I say, as such, he dissembles mightily, he insinuates himself with Persons of all Humours and Interests, and deludes the Serious and Well-meaning, with Promises and Expectations, and high Pretences of Publick Good; he pretends Piety and Religion, but it's to usher in Rebellion and Disobedience, a Contradiction to some positive Article, or express Precept, something or other which breaks the Chain of Faith, and interrupts that Universal

union

B

Respect

Respect which is due to God's Word and Commands. If the Devil shewed himself always bare-faced, or held up his Cloven Feet, People would be afraid of him, few would be so hardy as to entertain him: but therefore he transforms himself into an Angel of Light, that his Cunning and Cheat may be the less suspected. So his Agents and Ministers put on Sheeps Cloathing, when they are sent out to devour; and he and they both have their aim, if their Arts prevail but so far, as to hinder a hearty assent to, and compliance with any particular positively required. If any join issue here, he allows him to show as much Zeal as he pleases in other Matters; and the more Zeal the better for his purpose; because nothing can be a better Blind to keep either the Person himself, or others, from discerning his crime, and dangerous state; how that from henceforth both the Character and Privilege of a faithful Disciple is forfeited, according to those certain and unchangeable Maxims, *Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you*: And, *Whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.*

Joh. xv. 14.

Jam. ii. 10.

XI.

Piety, like Gold, is current every where, and at all times; they are but few who do not value it less or more; and generally Mens credit rises according to the measure in which they are thought to possess it. It is impossible that this Coin can come from the Devil's Mint. The Spirit of God only can be the Author of true and perfect Piety: I do not mean perfect as to degrees, but which is not lame and defective, which wants nothing to render it complete, which has all the requisite parts and proportions, and an universal conformity to the Mind and Will of God. This only is true Piety, and this the Devil
neither

neither can nor will help one to. But to further his Designs, he counterfeits it, and does it sometimes so neatly, that it is only perceptible by the Circumspect and skilful. That which has the colour, and some common resemblances, passes well enough with the generality, and therefore they have daily gross Cheats put upon them. Under the mask of Piety, hybrid Villanies have been perpetrated often, and under its shadow, damnable Doctrines have sprung up and spread. Some have had a beautiful form of Godliness, who both denied the Powers of it, and taught others to do so: Men of corrupt minds, such as are reprobate concerning the faith, who give heed to seducing Spirits, and the Doctrine of Devils: they who draw others from that Truth which is able to save them, have often-times a specious Exterior shew of Sanctity, and freedom from gross Blemishes; so that they are like painted and well-garnished Tombs, made proper to allure and turn aside the curious Passenger: Egregious Wickedness is not always joined to monstrous Opinions: The Authors and Maintainers of damnable Heresies, are not always guilty of gross Immoderacies. If *Vaninus* had conceal'd his Atheism, his Enemies could not have accused him. *Tertullian* was deceived by *Montanus's* profess'd Austerity, as well as by the pretended Revelations of *Maximilla* and *Priscilla*, the two Women he carry'd about with him. The *Messaliani*, or *Euchitæ*, were otherwise very innocent. *Epiphanius* tells us of one *Hieracas* an Physician of *Leontopolis*, in *Agypt*, who was both a learned Man, and very mortified to the World; he neither ate Flesh, nor drank Wine, and seem'd in all things very Exemplary; and yet this very Person did pervert the Christian Doctrine very much, and did propagate very dangerous Sentiments, which corrupted the minds

XII.

of the Monks, Hermits, and other Religious that were then in *Agypt*.

They who think all who hold damnable Doctrines are notoriously wicked in their Conversation amongst Men, are as much mistaken, as they who expect that all wicked Men and Hereticks should have a tragical End here; nor are they less mistaken, who fancy that there can be no evil, where there is some good; nor any thing false or dangerous, where there be some things true and useful. There be few even wicked Men, who have not some commendable Qualities; and there are few Hereticks who do not hold some certain and profitable Doctrines. But as a few good Qualities cannot excuse a general Course of Wickedness; so some few good Doctrines must not abate our Zeal against such impious and dangerous Tenets as may be mixed with them. Nay, our zeal and abhorrency against those, when so mixed, should be greater than when they are separated; because such a mixture does not take away the malignity of them, but only covers it, that the Simple and Unwary may be the more easily beguiled and poisoned. I know it is the Principle of some *Modern Divines*, to stretch out the Right Hand of Fellowship to all Parties and Persuasions; for they think Errors and Mistakes of the Judgment very innocent. The Condition of their Communion is Comprehension and Morality; and to shew their Moderation, they can plead the Defence of a *Bury*, when he strips the Gospel naked of its Essentials, but of a pretext to take off the foreign Cloaths and disagreeable Dress which others have put upon it; and that they may not scare *Deists* and *Socinians* from the Church, while they throw out all distinguishing Creeds; so while in the Pulpit they look upon the Scriptures at a distance only, and talk authoritatively from

Epictetus,

Epictetus, Seneca, Hierocles, and other Natural Men. They should be drawn in the Centre of a Circle, which contains Jews, Pagans, Mahumetans, and all without the Church; and all the several Sects which pretend to belong to it, only the Papist should be but half in; for it is not popular to make no difference betwixt him and others. I wish these Church-Levellers would consider, that as there is a Dwarfish Littleness, so there is a monstrous Latitude-Moderation, as all other Vertues have their Limits and Extreame on both sides, within which they should be kept, and without which they lose their Name. The Church of *Ephesus* is praised for not *bearing them which are evil*, Rev. 2. 2. for trying them who say, *they are Apostles and are* ⁶ *not*, for discovering *them to be Liars*, and for *hating the Doctrine of the Nicolaitans*: and because the Church of *Pergamus* did not so, therefore she is upbraided and reprov'd. v. 14, 15.

The growth of Sects and Heresies has been very much furthered by an indiscreet Moderation towards them, upon the Account: that those who followed them, either were generally esteemed Innocent, or held something that was good. If it had not been for this, neither *Socinians* nor *Quakers* would have spread so much, nor their damnable Doctrines taken such root. Moderation and Charity are good, but God never required them to encourage Error and Wickedness; nor yet to indulge Mens perverting the Faith, and contradicting the Infallible Declarations of his Holy Word.

By this it may be perceived whence my Zeal against *Bourignianism* ariseth. I have no personal Prejudice against the Author of this Sect, nor any of her Followers. I have all the good Will and good

Wishes

Wishes for them all, which Christian Charity can suggest, and besides a particular Kindness for some; but as there are some good Things in the Writings of *Antonia Bourignon*, so there be other Things very bad; she advanceth some Things of pernicious consequence, and the whole Scheme of her Principles have in my Judgment a tendency contrary to the Christian Constitution, which I think my self oblig'd to discover. It's true, I do not pretend to be infallible, but I will leave it to any indifferent Reader to judge, whether I be mistaken here, and whether I do this Woman and her Party any Injustice.

XIII. Indeed it is alledged, That I have Translated a Passage of *De Cort's* Letter to the *Vicar-General of Mechlin*, falsely and unfairly, to the perverting the Sense of it; The Passage is, *No body makes Prayers to her*; as if I would have insinuated that they worship her as the Papists do the Virgin, and other Saints; but I intended no such thing. I understood this Passage according to their own meaning, and published it only to show that the Author plac'd her in the highest rank of Prophets, payed her the respect that was wont to be given to *Samuel, Isaiah, Huldah*, and others, who had Power with God; and was very much displeas'd that none ask'd her Intercession with the Almighty, for preventing those Publick Judgments which were threatned and deserved. I did not apprehend that any would have interpreted me otherways, nor is there need to set my Invention on work to fix Absurdities upon them that do. I could have produc'd an Hundred more Instances, if I had not shunn'd being tedious. It's true, the Translation is a little close and literal, because I studied to deliver their Sentiments in their own words,

as

as much as possible: And if there was any Mistake here, it is a small one, and the taking notice of this so narrowly, is a proof of my Truth and Candour in other particulars; for *omnis Exceptio firmat in non Exceptis*.

Again, It is laid to my Charge that I am like to a Painter, who designing an Ugly Face, gives it a squint Eye, a crooked Nose, a big Tooth, and such like Deformities; in as much as intending a malicious Representation of *Antonia Bourignon*, and her Disciples, I pass by what is good in her or them, and only pick up here and there such things as may serve to this purpose. XIV.

May it not be a proper Answer to this, to say that he or she who has a very Ugly Face should not tempt a Painter to draw it: and if it must be done, it ought to be done Like, otherwise there is a Cheat put upon all who see it. The *Italians* are in Love with fine Pictures, and are not Curious what resemblance they bear to the Original: But here it concerns us to have a true Picture, an Exact and Natural Representation of the Person; and if such shew any Deformity, who can help it? The Painter is not to blame.

I have not given any Instances, but such as are true, nor shall any Provocation tempt me to do it: and if telling the Truth diminish the Character of *Antonia Bourignon*, those who have doted upon her, as a most perfect Beauty, and who have in all Companies magnified her as incomparable and above any thing in Nature; those, I say, may readily fall under some Censures, but I am innocent. When vain Women come to have their Pictures drawn, they desire the Painter to draw it very like, and only to do

do them Justice; which he knows is a plain Insinuation that he should add some strokes of his Art and Skill, and so to order it, that their Natural Blemishes may be shadowed. They would have me to do so with *Mademoiselle Bourignon*; but I crave their Pardon: This doth not answer my Design, which is to shew her, not according to their Fancy, but as she is; and their Complaints are only as those against a Painter, for coming too near to the Original, and for representing Nature a little too much. It is strange to see how much some love to be Cheated, and how much the Truth offends them.

As according to the Poets, there was once a Contest betwixt *Three Goddesses* about their Beauty; so now there is a Debate whether *Antonia Bourignon* is to be preferred to all the Learned World; to Fathers, Prophets and Apostles: and we would have this Debate decided, not by some partial *Paris* that is Bribed, but by a serious Consideration of the Truth, of which every one may be Judge. Wherefore the giving Instances which are incompatible with such Pretences as are Pleaded, is not Malicious, but Just and Necessary.

- XV. That this Woman hath some things good, I do not deny. She sometimes complains of and exposes the general Corruption of Christians very reasonably; and discourses of some Moral Virtues indifferently well, and with some heat and fervour. This the Publisher of *the Light of the World*, desires to be taken notice of particularly; and I know it is that which hath chiefly engaged him and others to her: But these things are not singular, nor reasons for so high an Esteem of her and her Writings. That which is singular and peculiar to *Antonia Bourignon*, is neither good

good nor true; and I have found nothing good but what is common, what is handled and recommended in every Practical Treatise, better or worse, according to the Talents and Gifts of the Author; yea, what is the Subject, of almost daily Sermons, so much undervalued by her and her Disciples. *Deum* Defensio
Testor (says Seckendorf.) *me qua potui diligentia, imo* Relat. de
credas velim, non sine præviis precibus, aliquot Antonia Ant. Bour.
libros legisse, sed reperire in illis nihil potuisse; quod me- Astr. Lys.
lius esset orthodoxa & usitata doctrina; certe nihil tale, P. 13.
cujus lectio librorum tot periculosissimis erroribus refer-
torum, & vanissimo fastu tumentium simplicioribus com-
mendari possit. Will any say, That Self-denial, Re-
 signation, Charity, and Divine Love, are new Names
 now, seeing many Hundreds of Years before she was
 Born, there have been constant Complaints that these
 Christian Vertues were not generally observed and
 practised: who can be ignorant either of the Nature
 of them, or our Obligations to them, that ever look'd
 seriously upon the Scripture? will the Authority of
Antonia Bourignon have any more Weight and Efficacy
 than *Moses* and the Prophets, *Jesus Christ* and the
 Apostles? If she hath other Doctrines than what
 comes from them, must we not inquire into the
 Certainty of her Mission? and why should the
 Truths, which they have long since delivered, be
 now Preached in her Name? is her word better or
 more to be relyed on? At first God laid only *Twelve*
Foundations, as sufficient for the Wall of the New
Jerusalem, viz. The Twelve Apostles of the Lamb. How Rev. 21. 14.
 comes a new one to be added in our Days? Are
 the other decayed? or did not God foresee what is
 Necessary? will Men offer to mend the Work of God?
 Oh what Insolency and Blasphemy is it to Attempt it.

*Les Er-
reurs Po-
pulaires.*
p. 197.

The setting up new Names and Authorities, and the pressing zealously the particular Opinions of Men, whether true or false, and the proposing plain Scripture Truths, as Private Doctrines, is a great Service to the Devil and his Interest. For by this Method he does pervert Mens Faith insensibly, and he takes off their Minds from a Devout Application unto Jesus Christ; who is the Supream Lord, and only Law-giver. This Consideration made *Luther* (as it is reported by *Monfieur d'Espagne*) hate his own Books, and wish that they might be Buried, lest Readers should wast that time upon them, which ought to be employed in reading the Scripture. They who fall into this Error, are more conversant with the particular Authors they are besotted with, than with Jesus Christ; and their Minds are more intent upon their Writings, than upon the Sacred Scripture. Whereas we should consider the Truth as it is in Jesus only, and not contend for *Paul*, *Apollo*, *Cephas*, or any other, so as to dishonour Christ, and forget his Authority. His Glory is given to others, when their Names and Sentiments are made the Standard and Measure of Religion and Truth.

If we would run the Race that is set before us aight, we must Look unto *Jesus*, who only is the Author and Finisher of our Faith; so far as others may help us to this, we may consider them too: but to fix our Eyes wholly upon any other, to make them altogether or equally the Subject of our Contemplations, is both Evil in-it self, and of dangerous Consequence; for by this, we run a hazard, either of halting or slipping out of the way. And this is the *Origo Mali*; the great Source whence all the Floods of *Sells* and *Hereses* have come upon the Church: This has destroyed

stroyed the simplicity of the Christian Religion in the Church of Rome, and has revived all the old damnable Doctrines, and other Extravagancies since the *Reformation*. Philosophers have often turned their Heads by a too earnest pursuit of new Opinions; but the Affecting new Systems of Religion, and the having an Appetite to every thing that appears plausible, was the old Disease of Mankind, and always Fatal. Some who now favour *Bourignianism*, I am sure are very capable to discern the Mischief of this, and other Errors; and I heartily wish that they would set themselves to cure the Inconstancy of our Natures, rather than to increase it.

But to go on with the different Censures of People, XVI.
while I seem to Combat Bourignianism, I advance it in the Judgment of some. Some of the Favourers of this New Sect, hope that my Narratives will rather recommend *Antonia Bourignon*, than ruin her Principles; if the rest be as the first.

If it be so, I am very unhappy, and have mis'd my aim very much. It is true, that weak Defences or Refutations, are always Prejudicial; and an Ignorant Zeal commonly has Effects contrary to that which is intended.

Nec semper feriet quodcumque minabitur arcus.

*Horat. de
Arte Poet.*

I am far from the Vanity of thinking, that these Errors and Delusions could not be better detected by another: but also I do not think, that how short so ever my Performance may come, I am so unlucky as to have rendred *Bourignianism* very lovely and desirable. I do easily believe that I have by that *Narrative*, excited the Curious to know more of the Life and Principles of *Antonia Bourignon*. But I do

not see what there is in that Account which may dispose Persons to love her. I purposely shewed her with all the Advantages, by which her fond Disciples do set her off; I would not deal so unfairly as to conceal any part of that high Character which they give unto her: But at the same time, I judge that I have given very good Reasons why that Character is not to be received, nor their Evidence admitted; because their Proofs are Unfufficient, their Expressions are Extravagant, their Narrations are Inconsistent, and in their transports of Zeal and Affection for this their Mistress, which are very frequent, they neither observe Truth nor Modesty.

Ibid.

Atque ita mentitur, sic veris falsa remiscet,

Ut dum vitat humum, nubes & inania capter.

There is as little air of Truth in the Accounts of Monsieur de Corré and Monsieur Poiret, as there is in the Poems of Prince and King Arthur, in composing which, the Author consulted his Fancy only; and tho' some have censured his Vanity in proposing these Poems which he conceived and brought forth in Coffee-Houses, and passing the Streets, as a Pattern for other Poets to write by; yet he could never be so vain as to think that either his Contrivance or Characters would be received for strict Truths, otherwise he must have forgot what the greatest Masters of that Art have observ'd themselves, and prescrib'd to others.

But neither Historians nor Biographers were ever allowed the liberty of Poets. That which is without Rythme, should have Reason and Truth. Matters of Fact

Fact should be nakedly delivered, without the byass'd Sentiments of the Relater. As there is either a Real or a fancied Defect of Natural Beauty, where Paint and Patching is used; so pure Truth is wanting where Fancy is studied; where big, swelling words are affected, where every Circumstance is exaggerated, and no Consequence left to the Reader's Judgment; but all positively dictat'd, and magisterially impos'd; not to perswade and convince, but to ensnare the unwary, and to obtrude upon them what might be rejected, if fairly offer'd. However Clamour, Impudence, and a multitude of words, do catch only lazy and inadvertent Persons; for the Judicious are rendred thereby more diffident and suspicious knowing that these Arts are seldom used, but when Reason and Truth are unserviceable.

Wherefore whatever honour is due to *Mademoiselle Bourignon*, whether she ought to be received as a new Light, as the Organ of the Holy Ghost, as the Great Restor'r of the Church, as the last and highest Gift of God to Mankind, sent to perfect the Redemption begun by Jesus Christ, of whom he was a Type and Figure, whether she be greater or equal, or how far a just Comparison may be made betwixt him and her, whatever be in this, certainly *Messieurs de Cor* and *Poiret*, her two great Evangelists, from whom the Rest copy, are not to be compared to his, nor near so worthy of Credit, and yet it is not to be imagin'd, why the last and greatest Manifestation of Wisdom, Goodness and Mercy, should not be as credibly Attested as the former, and as free of Suspicion. Abstracting from their miraculous Gifts, the Candour and Simplicity of the Sacred Penmen are so convincingly visible, that none but very perverse Persons

Persons will question their Veracity. 'Tis true, they were as much in the Interest of Jesus as could be, nor was it possible to be more zealous to have others into it; yet, like faithful and impartial Witnesses, they deliver Matters of Fact nakedly, and set down that which may seem to disgust, as well as what is pleasing; that Jesus Christ may be received, not upon their Authority, nor by virtue of enticing Words, and subtle Reasoning, but by the natural and undeniable Consequence of those things which they relate as Eye and Ear-witnesses. Whereas the Spirit and Practice of *De Cort* and *Poiret* are quite contrary, and therefore their Credit is too weak to sustain so important a Character as is raised by them to *Mademoiselle Bourignon*; and they must be very credulous, who, upon their simple Authority, believe her to be so extraordinarily Inspired and Dignified.

This was all I aim'd at, in that *First Narrative*. I purpos'd only in it to prove, That their Judgments are not Infallible, and far from being a competent Evidence of so weighty Matters; and without great vanity, I may be allowed to say, That at least a second reading will convince those who are not prejudiced, That I have done what I intended: that is, I have Cast and Disprov'd their Evidence.

XVII.

But alas! such is the Corruption of our Natures, and the fatal Destiny of some, that the plainest Representation of Error and Vice can neither prevent nor cure them: The offering help to recover them, doth but provoke; and the Provocation is the greater, as the Errours with which they are tainted are the more gross. If Persons were dispos'd to hear Reason calmly, 'twould be an easy task to expell Error, and to make Truth prevail. But Reason bears little sway

sway in the World; the most are under the dominion of Prejudices, which allow no Freedom to our Reasonable Faculties, or which keep them under a very great Restraint. Where Prejudices have entred and taken possession, it is hard for Reason to force its way: and yet we must not give over the attempts. If Physick do not perfect the Cure at first, it must be renewed; and there is ground for Hopes, if once the malignant Humours be loosened from their seat, and set in motion: which may be, and often is done by other Remedies than those they call proper Specificks; for commonly these are not applied, until the Body be first prepared. So I intended the *First Narrative*, only as a Preparation to the main Cure; and whether that be well or ill done, it may be serviceable, if it has but this effect, to shake a little the lazy and unreasonable Credulity of the *Bourignianists*, and if it does but put them upon the Enquiry into the truth of such important Matters as they have over-hastily believed. I expect this at least, otherwise the Persons are truly irrecoverable; no cure can be wrought, unless they will think, and consider: and if once they do it, I doubt not the success. For as the Devil flees, when he is resisted; so Error, which comes from him, loses ground, when it is enquired into; neither of them can endure a Tryal: this is the peculiar property of Truth. I may compare *Bourignianism*, and some other Delusions, to *Glass-Drops*, which should be viewed at a distance, and very slightly handled, because upon the first Experiment they dissipate into Vapours.

These Reflections and Censures were written to XVIII. me by a Friend: But there is one who has printed his Judgment of this Matter, in a *Postscript* to
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The State of the Philadelphian Society. He is offended with a Passage of my Preface, which insinuates, That the Refutation of *Bourignianism*, will overturn the Principles and Practices of our *Quakers* and *Philadelphians*, as well as the *Quietists* and *Pietists* abroad; because they are of the same kidney, and do all stand upon the same foundation. And I still think that I had good reason to say so, because some Sentiments and Practices are common to all the Enthusiastick Tribe; and whatever particular Differences there are amongst them, they nevertheless flow all from the same Cause and Source: viz. 1. An intolerable Pride, That they have the Spirit, more than others; That all their Fancies and Conceits are of God. And 2. Either a total Contempt and Disregard of the Scripture, or a levelling it with their own private and particular Sentiments; so that it must either speak as they do, or have no Force and Authority. Now that which is a good Antidote against these two Evils, may be esteem'd a *Catholicon* for all the Distempers of Enthusiasm, whatever Names and Distinctions they go under.

They say, *Omnes simile claudicat*; and indeed, I do not see how his is in anywise pat to the purpose: Sure I am (saith he) That our Church of England-men and Presbyterians, as well as the Unitarians and Zwinglians abroad, are not so very easily to be wounded all by one Blow, though they pretend to stand all upon the same Foundation, and do resolve the Principles of their Faith according to the same Rule. For as sure as he is, I am very much persuaded, and I believe so are you, that he is mistaken; for they do not stand upon the same Foundation, nor have they the same Rule for resolving their Faith. The Church of England, and those of the
Episcopal

Episcopal Persuasion, you know, defend **Episcopacy** by, 1. Its being more proper to preserve the Order and Unity of the Church, even in the Judgment of *St. Jerom*, the great Patron of *Presbyterians*, as they imagine. 2. The Universal Practice of the Church, which was never introduc'd by any Council, or Humane Authority. 3. The Practice of the Apostles, which is above all Humane Authority. 4. The Conformity to the *Jewish* Oeconomy, which was established by God himself, and which, by the Example of Christ, and the frequent Reasoning of *St. Paul*, was to be the Rule and measure even under the Gospel, as to all things suitable to the Nature and Ends of the same. Now how can this Foundation be shaken by the proper Arguments against *Presbytery*? As, 1. The Confusion of Parity. 2. The Novelty of its Constitution: 3. Which was introduc'd and occasion'd by the Necessity of *Calvin's* Circumstances. And, 4. The Unfufficiency of his Authority, when laid in the balance with that of the Catholick Church, and the undeniable Instances of the Apostles. Those of the *Episcopal* Communion cannot fall with the *Presbyterian*, unless the *Quaker* can effectually prove that there is no settled Ministry; and the *Libertine*, that there ought to be no Government; and the *Erastian*, that Religion and the Church are and ought to be entirely subjected to the Prince and Civil State; that their Will and Humour are as much to be regarded as the Practice of the Apostles, the Example of Christ, Reason, or Divine Institution. If *Dr. Tillotson's* famous Sermon, and *Dr. Wake's* late Book, can be shewed as undoubted Demonstrations, both the Church of England and *Presbyterians*

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may

may put up their Papers, and lay their Hands upon their Mouths; and so may both *Protestants* and *Papists*.

In like manner, those who hold a *Trinity*, build their Faith upon the Authority, Certainty and Perspicuity of the Revelation of the Scripture, constant Tradition, which gives this, with other Articles, as *the Faith once delivered to the Saints*, by Christ and the Apostles; the weakness of Humane Reason; to comprehend all Mysteries; and particularly the Infinite Nature of God; and the unreasonableness of refusing an assent to a plain Revelation, only because the Subject is above our reach, when there are many things in Nature which we are forced to acknowledge, though their Consistency is an hidden and unintelligible Mystery. But these are things which *Unitarians* will not yield; they refuse this Foundation, and build upon a particular one, which may be overturned, while the other stands sure. Indeed, both *Trinitarians* and *Unitarians* would be thrown to the ground, if the Doubts of *Deists* could be turned into indubitable Proofs, that there never was any Revelation at all; or the Atheists Quibbles and Witticisms could be changed into solid, irrefragable Demonstrations, that there is no God. And at this rate there may be, with as great likelihood, *one Comprehensive Blow* given to all the several Disputes amongst Mankind, by advancing Sceptical Arguments, that there is no Certainty at all; that it is doubtful whether Men, as well as Brutes, may not be meer *Automata*, without Sense, Reason or Perception; that it cannot be known when they are asleep, or when awake, whether they do not always dream, when they think they

they see clearly. If there be no other Life, no State after this, we and the *Philadelphians* both trouble our selves to no purpose: And yet he must be very ignorant of our Principles, who would say, that we resolve our Faith alike: or that the proving them guilty of gross Delusions, does also prove, that we have no sure, fixed, or sufficient Rule to walk by. I cannot chuse but laugh, when I see him endeavour to abate Mens Reasonable abhorrency of a private deluding Spirit, by calling it *the Principle of Internal Light*; as if soft and new Names could change the nature of old, ugly Diseases. Nor is it less ridiculous, how he shuffles off the Imputation of *Enthusiastical Impostures and Delusions* from his Party, and others of the same kidney, by saying, *That none have written better, or with more perspicuity and solidity against these, than they who have possessed this Principle*: as if it was impossible or unheard of, for one to be deluded, and yet not to be sensible of it; or to exclaim against a thing, of which he himself is as guilty as any: And I do not mean the Exclamations of gross, designing Hypocrites; as when a Rogue holds up his Hands, and cries out, *Villany! Villany!* or like that notorious Whore, Sir Roger *L'Estrange* some where speaks of, who had always in her mouth, *O the Impudence of Women now a-days!*

It seems that this Author did never walk about *Beth-Jehem*, where he might have seen some who very properly belong'd to the House, laughing and bemoaning the Madness of others that were shut up there. *Barton* wrote a large *Folio* upon Melancholy, and yet, they say, he was Hypochondriack as much and as frequently as any. Monsieur *Jurien* cautions against

False Prophets, and yet none can deny now, but that he ought to be listed amongst them, having with a witness come short of his peremptory Prognostications. So the profound *Juan de la Cruz* (which this Author admires) may have written well against Enthusiasm, and yet, for ought I know, as much an Enthusiast as any; for I own that I have not perus'd him, having long since turn'd off the Conversation of the Mysticks. For though they, now and then, do deliver pious and useful Thoughts; yet generally their Imagination is so much heated with the contemplation of uncommon things, that they, for the most part, rave and talk extravagantly: and, in my judgment, it is equally useful and well-spent time, to dive into their Meaning, as to trace the Notions of a Bedlamite. Mystical Divinity contributes as little to True Religion, as Profound Metaphysics do to the solid Use of Reason: the Chimera's and subtle Notions of the one and other, make giddy Heads fit only to be kept within the Walls of a Cloister; for if they walk abroad, they are laugh'd at, and their singular Notions and Whimsies obstruct both their Esteem and the Good which otherwise they might do.

But to return to this *Philadelphian*, who, it seems, has a tender Respect for *Mademoiselle Bourignon*: He says, *That he hopes to see her true Character undertaken by one that is neither a Friend nor an Adversary.* Who, I pray, can this be? or from what part of the World must he come? Certainly he is an *Utopian*; and this Author is a new *Hennepin*, he knows Intelligent Creatures, different from the Good and Bad both of this World and the other, who can see Good
and

and Evil, without Love or Hatred, Favour or Aversion. And from whence will this wonderful Undertaker have his Instructions? All that have yet written of this Woman, are either *Friends* or *Adversaries*; and if he be a meer Transcriber, he is as little to be trusted as his Authors. The Character of *Antonia Bourignon* is not, according to my judgment, to be undertaken as the *History of Troy*, or the *Battel of Pharsalia*, with a perfect Indifferency whether the Conquerors, or Conquered were in the Right, or which of them shewed most Valour. He that enquires into the Character and Principles of *Mademoiselle Bourignon*, and has a just value for important Truths, cannot chuse but be of one side or other: if he find her truly and divinely Inspired, he will and ought to be a Friend; otherwise he ought to condemn her as an Impostor, or deluded Person, and then I think he may be reckon an *Adversary*: and if we can suppose him very little concern'd whether she be one or other, his Account is not much to be regarded; for then we may very well suppose that he did not take pains to know the Truth.

But I believe by this Periphrasis, the Author meant an Impartial Person, which he thought a Friend or Adversary could not be; 'tis true, the Characters both of Friends and Enemies are sometimes liable to Suspicion; for the first generally over-do, and the other seldom come a just length: Love and Hatred blind the Judgment, and are like Impetuous Torrents, which commonly overflow the Banks of Reason and Discretion. But yet it is possible, and I hope frequent, whatever this Author thinks, that both Friends and Adversaries will be just, and give a Testimony

testimony to be relied on; nor can the Testimony of either be reasonably doubted, when it is evident that they respect Truth, and not the Persons of Men, and are moved by the Merits of the Cause, and not by Interest, or unreasonable Prejudices. If the Ingenuity of such cannot be trusted, we shall never be able to discuss *Bourignianism*, or any other Matter; and he is at needless trouble, when he writes and prints the Accounts, of the *Philadelphian Society*.

I am of the opinion, that no body suspects the learned Dr. *Prideaux* of *Mahometanism*, or is so uncharitable as to think him no sincere Friend to Jesus Christ: Is therefore his *Life and Character of Mahomet* to be question'd, which he has written with so much Ingenuity and Accuracy? I cannot satisfy this Man that I am his just *Medium* between a Friend and an Adversary; for truly, I am as yet no Friend to *Mademoiselle Bourignon*, but such an Adversary as would become a Friend if Truth could oblige me. As one was willing to be a Papist, if he could get over Transubstantiation, but said he, *it is past my belief*: Once for all, I promise to be as faithful in relating *Matters of Fact*, according to my Knowledge, as if I was a Witness upon Oath; and I shall also endeavour to judge impartially according to Truth.

But, Dear Sir, I ask you Pardon for detaining you so long with my Scribble: Nor can I give Monsieur *Paschal's* excuse when he wrote a long Letter, that *he had no time to make it shorter*; but 'tis the Custom of this Country to use little Ceremony, they are seldom at the Pains to put on fine Cloaths, but walk Abroad, give and receive Visits in their loose Chamber-dress: Now I treat you thus familiarly, I send you

you a careless Letter, which wants the Accuracy of those Books you are Perusing; and yet I know that you have so much Kindness and good Nature, as not to be offended, or to think your self slighted: for 'tis your Maxim to welcom your Friends heartily, whatever way they come.

I hear that some worthy Friends and Acquaintance look impatiently for the following Narratives, and complain that they are not sent; therefore let me beg the favour of you, to acquaint them with what I have written for my Excuse; and to shew them that besides the hindrance from the Necessity of my Circumstances, I have been a gathering new Materials up and down all proper places; and so soon as I have put them in order, with the things I had prepared before I left *England*, they shall be transmitted. But being at this distance from the Press, I cannot send my Papers to it, as before, till all be finished, lest it should be stopt too long by contrary Winds; nor can I send any without first taking Copies, lest they should Miscarry, and I be put to a second Trouble of thinking and consulting Books: And also, I must now write all my self, having no Amanuensis here, so that it is no wonder if my Work be tedious.

If you, and my other worthy Friends, shall think it worth the while to satisfie Strangers in this Matter, by making this more Publick, I will not be against it; provided you give your self the friendly trouble of correcting the grosser Faults, which may disgust nicer Palates.

I will be careful not to abuse your Friendship, but I intend to presume a little upon it, and to give you the trouble of receiving all I send from hence, which

which I do submit entirely to your just Correction both as to Matter and Expression; if before they go to the Press, you will be at the Pains to read them, with a Pen in your Hand to fit them to your own Mind, I shall have less cause to fear the Censures of others.

That I may at last deliver you from my tedious Company, I wish you all Happiness, and I will be always,

Dear Sir,

Rotterdam, Apr. 27. 98.

Your very Humble, very Sincere,

and Affectionate Servant,

J. COCKBURN.

